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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Title:

(1) LATVIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE
NEW YORK DIVISION

Character:

INTERNAL SECURITY - R - LATVIA

Synopsis:

TEODORS PETERSONS, former President of NY Council of Latvian Organizations, stated organization is chartered under NY laws and exists for cultural, educational, and social purposes. Composed of delegates from largest Latvian organizations in NY area such as Latvian Lutheran Church, Latvian Catholic Church, and Daugavas Vanagi and other smaller Latvian organizations. PETERSONS stated newer generation of Latvians in NY is conscious of Bolshevik threat to man's freedom and as a whole are anti-Communist. ARTURS VALTERS, former President of Daugavas Vanagi, stated Daugavas Vanagi is strictly a welfare organization to help needy former members of Latvian Legion or their widows. Knew of no Communist or pro-Soviet infiltration of any Latvian organization in the US.

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DETAILS

On February 15, 1961, ORESTS BERLINGS, 7501 Ridge Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York (NY), who is of Latvian origin and who came to the United States (US) in 1950, stated that he had no knowledge of any Communist or pro-Soviet activity among Latvians or Latvian organizations in the NY area.

BERLINGS mentioned that "Latvians" was now the chief Latvian newspaper in the US and he was acquainted with some of the personalities associated with the newspaper. While in Germany in the late 1940's, BERLINGS had helped run a Latvian newspaper and knew HELMARS RUDZITIS, who is the present publisher of the newspaper "Latvians". RUDZITIS had been a publisher of books in Riga and BERLINGS had known him slightly in Riga. When RUDZITIS came to the US, he acted as a sponsor for BERLINGS. BERLINGS said he had, more or less, helped RUDZITIS found the newspaper "Latvians" in the US, but at that time they had never anticipated that it would increase its circulation to its present extent.

BERLINGS said that he had known RABACS, one of the editors at "Latvians", before and termed him a steady, straightforward, honest individual who was above reproach. He stated that while RABACS might sometimes appear simple, he was nevertheless a man of some intelligence. BERLINGS said RABACS had stayed with the Latvian newspapers when the Russians came into Latvia and therefore had been regarded with suspicion by a few Latvians, but BERLINGS stated there was no question in his mind as to RABACS anti-Communist attitude.

On April 4, 1961, TEODORS PETERSONS, Apartment 1C, 2679 Decatur Avenue, Bronx, NY, telephone LU 4-7833, who is employed by General Builders of Queens, NY, advised that he was the president, last year, of the NY

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Council of Latvian Organizations. He stated that the organization is chartered under NY laws and exists for cultural, educational, and social purposes. PETERSONS stated it is perhaps the main Latvian American organization in one way, in that it is composed of delegates from the largest Latvian American organizations. However, the council has no headquarters and is active only in a limited way. It is composed of delegates from the Latvian Lutheran Church, of which PETERSONS is a member, of delegates from various organizations of this church including the choir, Ladies Aid Society, etcetera, and of delegates from the Latvian Catholic Church, Daugavas Vanagi, and smaller organizations such as the Latvian Association of Architects, Latvian Association of Engineers, Latvian Association of Jurists, and Association of Latvian Fraternity Groups.

The new president of the NY Council of American Organizations is CHARLES STANKIEWICH, 1101 Kelly Street, Bronx, NY. STANKIEWICH is an "old American", having come to the US from Latvia about 1924, and he is anti-Communist, according to PETERSONS.

PETERSONS advised he belongs to the Association of Latvian Fraternity Groups or the NY Latvian Fraternity Groups as it was once called. Like most of the smaller Latvian organizations it is not particularly active. STANLEY FUDANS is the president of the organization. PETERSONS stated that FUDANS is anti-Communist, but he knows nothing of his background.

PETERSONS stated that the newer generation of Latvians in New York City (NYC) is conscious of the Bolshevik threat to man's freedom and as a whole is anti-Communist.

He said he has heard of the Latvian Unity Group on Lexington Avenue, which is supposed to be "pinkish".

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He stated it is composed of old emigres who came to the US from Russia in about 1905. He said the group is apparently composed of older men who knew only life under the Czar and feel that anything that has happened since that time, including Communism, is progress.

PETERSONS related that VICTOR KAMINSKY has been publicly active among Latvians in the NY area as an anti-Communist. PETERSONS said KAMINSKY seemed sincere but he knew nothing of his background.

PETERSONS stated that there is no Latvian community in the NY area as such. Even the Latvian churches have no church buildings, although the Lutheran Church now has a parish building in Brooklyn. He said he knew of no Communist or pro-Soviet activity among Latvian organizations in the NY area.

PETERSONS stated that he had attended the University of Riga and was a attorney in Riga when the Russians took over Latvia in 1940. He was a legal advisor to ALFRED EHNINS, Minister of Information of the Latvian Government. He came to the US in 1950. He is married and has a daughter who attends Uppsal College and a son who attends Clinton High School in Bronx, NY.

On April 17, 1961, ARTURS VALTERS, Superintendent of 537 Herzl Street, Brooklyn, NY, residing in Apartment #2 at this address, advised that the largest Latvian organizations in the US are the American Latvian Association, Daugavas Vanagi, and the NY Latvian Society. The last named is a benevolent society, over sixty years old. In addition, the Latvian Lutheran Church and the Latvian Catholic Church are large organizations. He advised that there is no particular Communist or Soviet infiltration in any of the Latvian organizations in the US that he knew of.

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He stated there is a smaller group of Latvians around the Latvian language newspaper "Amerika Latvietis" in Boston. It is composed primarily of older men who came to the US at the time of the 1905 Revolution. They still tend to think in terms of the ideas and ideals of those earlier years. This group is dwindling and recently Daugavas Vanagi took over the building which had been occupied by "Amerika Latvietis".

VALTERS stated that he had been the president for the past four years of the NY Branch of Daugavas Vanagi. The current president is JANIS LACIS, 611 Argyle Road, Brooklyn, NY, who came to the US from England. VALTERS said Daugavas Vanagi is composed of veterans of the Latvian Legion, who fought against both the Russians and Germans in World War II. It is strictly a welfare organization to help needy former members of the Latvian Legion or their widows.

VALTERS stated there is a small colony of Latvians in Brentwood, Long Island, but no actual Latvian community in the NY area as such.

VALTERS stated he was born in Latvia in 1915, and was a farmer. He fought in the Latvian Legion and left Latvia after being wounded in February, 1945. He came to the US in 1952, and was naturalized in 1957.

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